



# The Shepherd's Voice

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## MINUTE WITH MIKE

*Call upon Me on the day of trouble; I will rescue you, and you will honor Me.*

*Psalm 50:15*

*Then you will call, and the Lord will answer; You will cry for help, and He will say, 'Here I am.'*

*Isaiah 58:9*

Dear sisters and brothers in Jesus,

A warm, flowery May greeting to you and yours! As we see the glory of God's creation springing up from the ground in fragrant beauty, might these flowers remind us of the glory of the Lord and the beauty and fragrance of His love for us all.

It was bound to happen; I had always felt the virus was going to become personal sooner or later. I had always felt up until just a few weeks ago I personally knew next to no one who was infected by COVID. But things have changed; not only my dear stepmother, but my wife as well has tested positive. It caused me once again, still, to pray for God's intervention and mercy upon these two ladies and us all.

For more than a year now I have been praying, seeking, asking God what this is all about. Is it a disciplining of His children? Is He trying to get the attention of the church in the west gone soft and lazy? I don't know for sure, but what I do know is that all of this has caused me to seek Him and depend upon Him more than ever, and for that I am deeply grateful.

*The Late Rev. Robert Murray McCheyne once wrote: Our natural ability and educational advantage do not figure as factors in this matter (appealing to God for help and mercy); but a capacity for faith, the ability to pray, the power of a thorough consecration, the ability of self-denigration, an absolute losing of oneself in God's glory and an ever present and insatiable yearning and seeking after all the fulness of God. Such prayers can set the church ablaze for God, not in a noisy, showy way, but with an intense and quiet heat that melts and moves everything for God.*

I think you feel the same. I want to set the church aflame for God! I want to set my heart, my family, my country, and my world aflame with His glory, joy, truth, goodness, and love! The two passages quoted above are His promises, and I know He will always answer our prayers. I know He will come and deliver! Maybe later today, maybe next week, maybe in a thousand years, but He is ever faithful, and I cry out for His justice.

Bless you as you continue to cry out as well for those things which God has placed on your heart. As I pray for you, I think about some of your burdens: restoration of health, goodness and success for your children, safety and companionship, peace in these later years. And as we pray, we see more and more with the eyes of Jesus. We pray for the hungry, the poor, those being bullied and victimized. We pray for those who must flee their homes, for those enslaved, for those aborted. Oh, my dear friends, might we consecrate ourselves to the Lord Jesus through a new season of prayer and intercession? Might we ask God for His favor upon our little family of faith, that He would bring us a few others that we may love, and they, in turn, can come to know a new family of faith? I pray...

May the Lord Jesus, who Himself prays for you and me, come and fill our hearts with the goodness of His Holy Spirit. For His praise and His glory, forever and ever!

In the love and privilege you have afforded me as pastor and friend,

*Mike*

## SESSION NEWS

### Treasurer's Report –

\$ 34,351	Cash on Hand as of 3/31/2021
+ 25,611	Certificate of Deposit (Northpointe Bank) (less following committed funds)
- 48	Accrued Joyful Noise offerings
<u>- 11,000</u>	Building Fund
\$ 48,914	Uncommitted Funds Available

Notes: Uncommitted funds as of the end of January were \$46,739. *Our cash GAIN in Feb/Mar was + \$2,175.*

### Pastor – Following items, events and dates were discussed:

- Mike reported on the status of Donna and his exposure to Covid; Donna is positive, and he is negative. This will necessitate Mike being absent from the church for period of some weeks due to quarantine.
- Looking at outdoor worship dates: subsequently were able to obtain reservations at Dutton Park for May 23 and July 18.
- Mike plans on beginning a series of sermons on major theological questions raised in Table Talk, after he completes the Book of Mark. The topics were previously submitted to Session.
- Pulpit supply is already arranged for the Sundays of April 18 and 25 while they will be absent, and a pastor is needed for April 11. Gary suggested Rev. Meengs.
- The Seminary has advised us that we will not be able to use the facility from mid-May through early August due to extensive remodeling. Mike is pursuing other options with the Seminary; the possibility of using the Kentwood library; and Jim will check on East Paris CRC building availability.

### Other Matters –

- Brooks Memorial Scholarship Fund – Jim Miller had submitted a revised set of bylaws for this fund, **which were adopted and approved by unanimous consent.**
- Missing members – discussed; Jim Miller will send out a list to Elders of missing members to be called.

### Personnel & Nominating –

- Nominating team reports that they will nominate Robert Adams as the new Elder. New Deacons were discussed, and the situation needs to be further resolved regarding Elaine leaving the Board of Deacons.
- It was proposed that the Session consist of four Elders for the church year 2021-2022, **which was adopted and approved by unanimous consent.**

- Pastor Mike and the Clerk submitted a new Manual of Ministries to comply with the provisions of the church bylaws. Upon review, **it was adopted and approved by unanimous consent.** The Clerk will prepare two sets of documents in binders, one for the Pastor and one for the Clerk.
- A congregational meeting to elect new officers needs to be scheduled for late May. In addition to Elders and Deacons, we need to elect Robert Adams as Secretary, Bill Keating as Treasurer, and Jim Miller as Asst. Treasurer.

## DATES

Sunday (2<sup>nd</sup>) 10:00am Sunday Morning Worship and Communion; Pastor Mike returns – Mark 16:9-20; 3:30pm Resume devotions at Samaritas; the Terraces

Thursday (6<sup>th</sup>) National Day of Prayer  
11:00am -1:00pm Outdoor community event at Calvin Theological Seminary; All are welcome (Come for a few minutes, or as long as you can...)

Friday (7<sup>th</sup>) 9:30am Men’s Breakfast Devotional at (Bob Evans)

Sunday (9<sup>th</sup>) 10:00am Worship – Mark 15:16-37

Thursday (13<sup>th</sup>) 1:00pm Bilyea’s Home group meeting - All are welcome...

Thursday (13<sup>th</sup>) 2:30pm Session meeting

Sunday (16<sup>th</sup>) 10:00am Worship – Mark 15:38-47 (Last Sermon in Mark series); Meeting of the Congregation after worship; Election of Church Officers

Sunday (23<sup>rd</sup>) 11:00am Pentecost Sunday - Outdoor Worship and Church Picnic at Shady Side Park in Dutton; 5pm Devotions at Raybrook

Thursday 27<sup>th</sup>) 1:00pm Bilyea’s Home Group Meeting - All are welcome...

Sunday (30<sup>th</sup>) 10:00am Worship – Begin new Preaching Series: The State of Theology

Monday (31<sup>st</sup>) Memorial Day

## BIRTHDAYS/ANNIVERSARIES –

### MAY

2 Veyola Kenyi  
3 Cammi Adams  
9 Faywen Adams  
20 Katherine Kenyi  
20 Al Boerema  
21 Kennedy Barrett  
25 Henry Gachini (Anniv.)  
30 Trinity Gipe

## SERVING THIS MONTH

May 2<sup>nd</sup> Liturgist: Henry, Sound Booth: Gary & Dana, Special Music: Pastor Mike; Organist: Marjorie, Communion Bread: Rachel, Preach: Pastor Mike

May 9<sup>th</sup> Liturgist: Henry, Sound Booth: Gary & Dana, Special Music: Adams, Preaching: Pastor Mike, Organist: Marjorie

May 16<sup>th</sup> Liturgist: Robert, Sound Booth: Adams, Special Music: Danas, Preaching: Pastor Mike, Musician: Maureen

May 23<sup>rd</sup> Special Music: Adams, Preaching: Pastor Mike

May 30<sup>th</sup> Liturgist: Robert, Sound: Adams, Special Music: Henry & Rachel, Preaching: Pastor Mike, Musician: Maureen

## MEMBERS/FRIENDS IN NEED OF PRAYER

Linda Van Heuvelen, Jean Bailey, and Vi Squires (cancer), Barb Bailey (broken hip), Joyce VanderLaan (healing from shingles); homebound members Joan Walstrom, Pat Doorn, and Cathy Jo Wolters

## JOYFUL NOISE OFFERING

Our May/June recipient of our Joyful Noise Offering will be In the Image, a very well-known and respected ministry operating in Grand Rapids. The mission of In the Image is to provide hope, dignity, and respect through the best shopping experience money does not have to buy. Their Vision: That everyone in need of clothing and household necessities shops for free in a welcoming environment. Having moved from their location on Division, In the Image is now located at 4255 Kalamazoo Ave. (SE) in Grand Rapids, Michigan (49508) in order to better serve their clientele. Their offices are open Monday through Friday 10:00am – 3:00pm. They may be contacted at (616) 456-6150.

We are pleased to report that our Joyful Noise collections for March/April amounted to \$139.71. We matched that with Mission funds and were able to make a \$279.42 contribution to our designated recipient, Mel Trotter Ministries.

## COMING IN MAY

We will be ending our two-year study in the Gospel of Mark on Sunday, May 16. We will next undertake a series of sermons and Newsletter pieces coming out of a study done every two years by Ligonier Ministries. The study is called The State of Theology. This study is based on a survey taken from among confessing Christians (some of whom are church leaders and pastors), asking basic questions about one's faith commitments. Of the 35 questions for example are: (Question #1) Do you agree or disagree – God is a perfect being and cannot make mistakes, or (Question #6) Do you agree or disagree – Jesus is the first and greatest being created by God, or (Question #16) Do you agree or disagree – Modern science disproves the Bible.

We think this series will be apropos in light of the many questions and competing truth claims raised now in our families and culture. The Session members are praying this series will sharpen our theological commitments and help us all draw closer in knowledge and love of our glorious and wonderful God!

## OUTDOOR WORSHIP AND CHURCH-WIDE PICNIC

We are working out the details as this Newsletter is being prepared, but we are excited to announce to the Church Family we will have two Outdoor Worship services with Family picnics to follow! The first will be May 23, that's Pentecost

Sunday. What a great day to be outdoors as we recall the followers of Jesus, being filled with the Holy Spirit and spilling outdoors to share the wonderful news! We'll gather a second time (both at Shady Side Park in Dutton) on Sunday July 18. We are watching the COVID restrictions closely as we plan for the events and meals of those days. Nonetheless, mark your calendar and share the invitation.

## NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER

The first Thursday in May has always been designated as the National Day of Prayer. It is a long-standing tradition that unites believers across the nation as we come together in one heart, spirit and prayer to pray for our country. There are countless events planned across the land, and a number here in Grand Rapids. As a member of the local NDoP Planning Team, I am thrilled to have become a part of a very special event that our church, GSPC, is co-hosting with Calvin Theological Seminary. Rev. Dr. Laura and I along with two seminarians will be leading the event, beginning at 11:00am and ending at 1:00pm. The events will be made up of four equal parts of prayer and music; 11:00-11:30am, 11:30-12noon, 12noon-12:30pm and 12:30-1:00pm. Dr. Laura has the 12:30-1:00pm spot, and I have the 11:30-12noon. The event is designed to allow for people to come and go as they will. So, pray with us for a few minutes, a half hour, or really as long as you are able to stay. The event will take place at the Seminary, right outside the doors under the large tent which will be set up. There will be a bag-lunch available for all who wish provided by the Seminary at the conclusion of the event. For more information, please contact Pastor Mike (616) 822-9988 [RevMCB@hotmail.com](mailto:RevMCB@hotmail.com). Please share this invitation with as many as you are able.

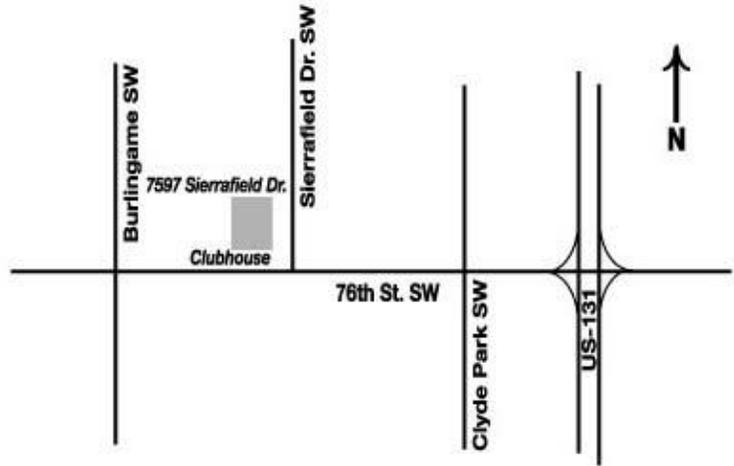
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## WORSHIP LOCATIONS

As most of you know, the Seminary is about to embark on some major remodeling of their facility, including the Chapel. We noted on Sunday, April 25, that the pews have already been removed. We expect our last service in the Chapel to be Sunday, May 16, and that we *may* be able to return on Sunday, August 1. That said, contractor schedules are notorious for "slipping", so it may well be later in August when we return.

We have scheduled worship services in a variety of locations for the interim, and that schedule is tentatively as follows:

- May 23 Outdoor Worship/Picnic at Dutton Park
- May 30 Sierrafield Clubhouse (Jim's condo complex; see map)
- June 6 – 27 Kentwood Library Meeting Room
- July 4 Sierrafield Clubhouse
- July 11 Kentwood Library Meeting Room
- July 18 Outdoor Worship/Picnic at Dutton Park
- July 25 Kentwood Library Meeting Room



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## LETTER FROM AMANUEL (*Fikre's Son*)

My freshman year hasn't been really bad, thanks be to God. Due to COVID-19, it wasn't exactly what I expected college to be like, but I tried to make the best out of it. Most of my classes have been online and if there are any in-person classes, the professors have to divide the students into small groups to where everyone can go once or twice a week. I am an Engineering student and taking classes like Calculus, and Engineering courses hasn't been very easy without being able to interact with the teachers. But, I am taking time to study as much as possible on my own to understand the materials which has been working for me so far. Because the vaccine restrictions are being lifted slowly, hopefully by the start of next semester, things will go back to normal. My future plan after graduation is to go out to the workforce and work in either Software engineering or some kind of cybersecurity company, but my main goal is to work for someone until I start my own business at some point. Finally, I would like to take this time to thank you all for your prayers and unconditional support through Scholarships like "The Doug and Elaine Brooks Memorial Scholarship fund". Support like this means the world to me as it is helping me in so many ways in my college life. So, again thank you so much and please continue remembering me in your prayers.

God Bless you all, Amanuel Hailemariam

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## **THE STRONGEST LOVE**

By Ruth Bell Graham (*Submitted by Jim Miller, from BGEA*)

To save us from eternal death, God had to give the very life of His Son, Jesus.

God would send His Son to earth as a human baby too weak to lift up His own head.

He would learn how to crawl, how to stand, how to run.

When He had grown to manhood, He would bring men back to the God whom they had forgotten. He would tell them: “The Lord our God loves you” (John 3:16). “You must love Him with all your heart and soul and mind and strength” (Matthew 22:37), and “You must love others as much as you love yourself.” (Matthew 22:39).

Then He would show them, as well as tell them, what God meant by “love” when He fed the hungry, healed the sick and made the blind to see.

Finally, He would show them the greatest love of all: He would die for them so that the way to God would be opened.

After that, no matter how far a person wandered, no matter how big the sin, there would still be this way back to God. For love like this would be stronger than sin – stronger than death itself.

*Dancing sunlight flows  
Through newborn baby green leaves  
Creation proclaimed*

*Join in the worship  
Birds sing, breezes blow, rejoice  
Nature's cathedral*

*Voices all singing  
Together, Almighty praise  
Under the blue sky!*

## **Praise and Picnic in the Park**

**Hosted by Good Shepherd Presbyterian  
Church (ECO)**

**All are welcome to worship with us!**

**DATE:** Sunday, May 23, 2021

**TIME:** 11:00

**WHERE:** Shady Side Park in Dutton,  
Michigan (7343 Hammond Ave.)



After the service we will gather for fellowship and lunch. The church will provide the meat dish (hamburgers and hot dogs). Individually packaged sides and bottled water will be offered.

*COVID precautions and regulations will be followed.*

